137

THE ISLAND JENUSA JUST OFF THE COAST OF LESU

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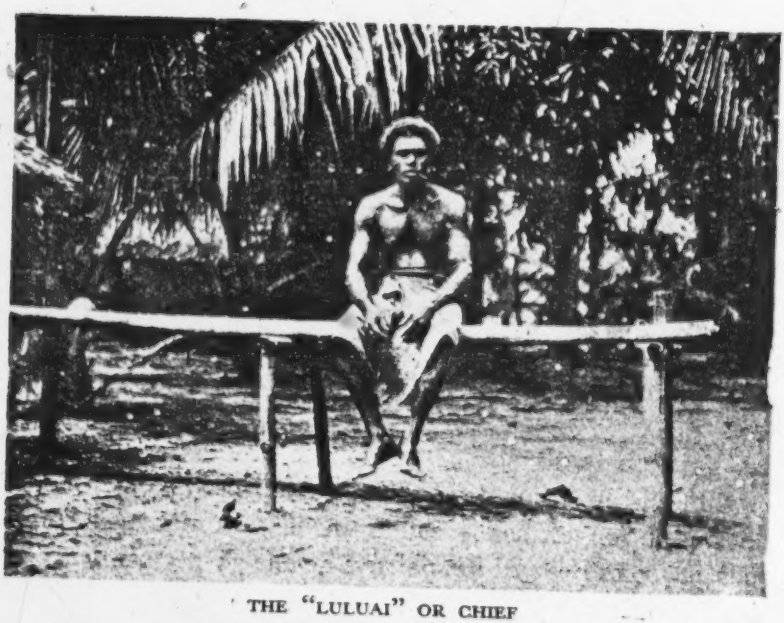
351

TYPICAL HOUSES

[facing p. 42]

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

142
291
417



THE "LULUAI" OR CHIEF

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291

A HAPPY FAMILY IN FRONT OF THEIR HOME

[Facing p. 43]

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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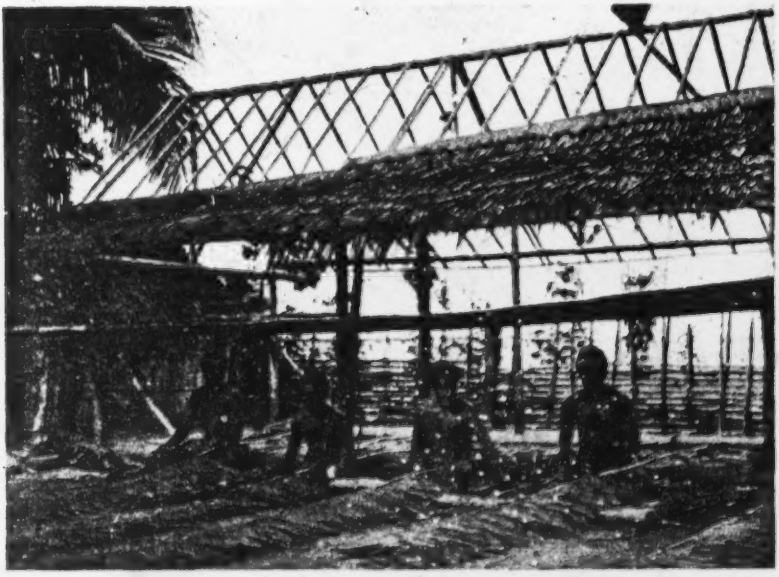
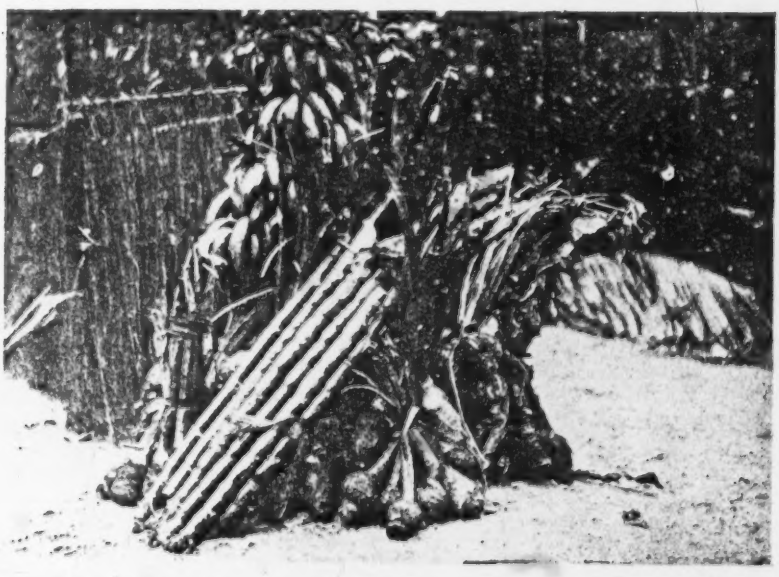


THATCHING THE ROOF

262



RITUAL PILE OF FOOD, SHOWING TARO, SUGAR-CANE, AND BANANAS

[FACING p. 148]

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



266 727 their enemies killed in warfare. I was told that the dead body was wrapped in leaves and baked in the *liga*, just as is other food. The adults who had tasted human flesh said that they enjoyed it, and there appeared, as far as I could ascertain, to be no idea of imbibing any spiritual qualities. It was merely another meat dish.

HOUSE-BUILDING

• 342 House-building is a masculine occupation, and is carried on whenever it is necessary to build a new house or mend an old one. A house lasts from two to three years, although the roof will have to be mended during this interval. A new house will be built quite close to where the old one stands. Should a man choose, he can move some distance away to another hamlet, although this is not done very frequently. [166] During my visit one man and his wife moved from the hamlet of Onel to Penguli, because the man had quarrelled with his wife's relatives at Onel, and because he wanted to live close to a man who was a good friend of his at Penguli. Since there is no individual ownership of land, a man may build on any unoccupied piece of ground.

Before building a new house a man will first make sure that his gardens are in good condition and that he has plenty of taro with which to feed his assistants. Assured of this, he will go to the bush and cut down some hard-wood trees for posts. Putting the posts in the ground in a straight line is a skilled job and not every man can do it. There were ten men in a village of two hundred and thirty people who were skilled in this. If a man is not able to do it he gets one of these skilled men to mark off the ground in a straight line with a vine and place sticks where the posts are to be put. The future owner of the house will then put up the frame, the posts and cross-beams; then all the men in his immediate community—his own hamlet and near-by ones—assist him in bringing in leaves from the bush for the thatched roof,

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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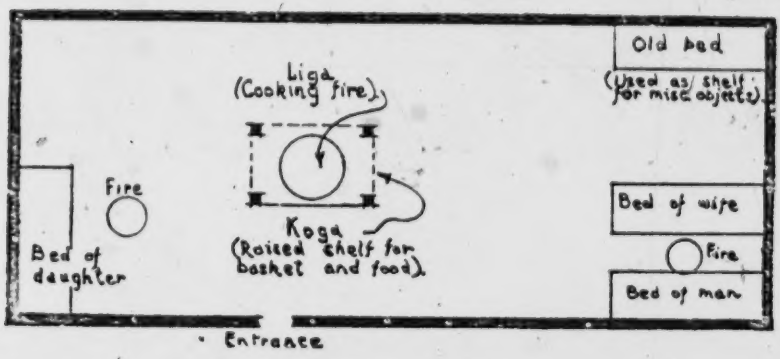
which they begin to make. Bamboo poles are split into long segments two or three inches in width. The leaves are separated and "sewed" to the bamboo segments. The "thread" used in sewing is the fibre from the leaf. Each thatched layer is piled one on top of another on the ground, and a bit later fastened on the framework of the roof by laying one layer on top of another (beginning from the lower edge of the roof), the tops about four inches apart. They are then tied to the cross-beams of the frame. The man whose house it is will not participate in the work as actively




INTERIOR OF A HOUSE

as the others, for he is busy tending the *liga*. His wife has brought in taro from their garden, and she, with the other women of the hamlet, is busy preparing it. At the end of each day's work the owner gives a feast for those who have assisted him, which is considered as payment. The making of the roof takes three or four days, while the collecting of the leaves takes one day, the "sewing" another day, and fastening them on the framework one or two more days.

After the roof is finished the owner works alone, making the walls of flat bamboo segments. Sometimes he will ask other men to help him, and in that case he feeds them as before. The beaten ground is the floor of the house, and the only opening is the door. When the house is completed the

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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342 owner makes the few necessary furnishings. Beds are made by placing bamboo poles side by side, three feet from the ground. There will be a space of several feet between each bed, and one for each person of the household. Between the [513] bed of the man and wife is the place for the fire, which will keep them warm at night and protect them from insects. (Bed-covers do not exist.) In the centre of the house is the cooking fire, *liga*. Above this place is built a bamboo shelf, [352] *kogo*, to hold baskets and baked taro, or any other household article. A man may eat half of a baked taro and place the remaining half on the shelf for the future when he will be hungry again. As a rule there are no decorations of any [353] kind inside or outside of the house, but there are the usual exceptions, and a few who are skilled may have a bit of carving on the outside.

PIG-HUNTING

224 The wild pig of the bush are hunted by a few men of the community at irregular intervals. Not all men are pig-hunters. To be one, a man must own a dog and either know, or be able to purchase, the magic which is said over a dog to make him effective. This magic is made only once over a new dog, not every time there is a hunting expedition. (In the same way magic is made only once over a new fishing-net.)

A man will start off early in the morning carrying his bamboo spear, accompanied by his own dog, and sometimes by two or three other dogs belonging to different men. The dogs track the pig but do not kill it, unless it should be a baby pig. When the dog has found the pig the hunter comes up and spears him. This, however, will usually only injure the animal and not kill him. If the pig is a small one, the man will fasten it on a bamboo pole and carry it home alone, but if it is big, he will tie up the animal so that it cannot run away, and then return to the village for men to assist him

1· Powdermaker E-F (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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## OTHER SERVICES

465 342 437 Besides magical and medical services, there are many others for which payment is made. Compensation is made for services of any kind. For instance, one man wanted to put a new roof on his house as the old one leaked. He spent a day in the bush collecting the necessary sago leaves, and the next day all the men from his hamlet and some from neighbouring ones helped him make the thatching. At the end of the day he gave them a feast and each man also received a stick of tobacco. Both the food and the tobacco are considered as payments for the assistance in thatching the roof. A few days later his father and brother helped him put the thatched leaves on the frame of the roof. This work took two days. There was no feast at the completion of the job, but each man received tobacco in payment. Similar payments are made for building a fence around a garden.

465 535 437 Those who participate in the dances at marriage, circumcision, and funeral rites receive payment. The dancers at *malanggan* rites, however, are not paid, except those who wear masks (*anis*). At the circumcision rites all the women who danced received food and tobacco from the women of Ponatlege, who were the mothers and clan relatives of the boys being circumcised.[1] When the food was distributed there was a speech indicating that it was in payment for the contribution of dancing. At the marriage rites of Tsuros all the dancers received tobacco and food. A few were given loin-cloths also. It will be remembered that at one of the rehearsals for these dances, when the women were laughing and not taking their dancing very seriously, they were reprimanded by an old man, who told them to dance better or they would not deserve the tobacco to be paid them later. At the all-night

[1] At the rites a month later, when the boys came out from their seclusion and the *malanggans* were displayed, the men who danced (with the exception of those wearing masks) were not paid.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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Another kinship pattern is that
183 upon the divorce of parents a child stays with its mother.
586 But even to this we find an exception, as when Maso married another man, her child, a little girl, stayed with her father and his second wife. So there are modifications even in the supposedly rigid kinship patterns.

183 In the realm of economics it is easy to see the same kind
423 of variations. For instance, although land is communally owned, I found one case where the rule was circumvented to suit the needs and desires of one individual, and a payment made for the temporary private ownership of a piece of land.[1]

183 An individual finds much expression in group-life, and following traditional patterns of behaviour, such as dancing
342 and wailing, but all individuals do not experience these religious emotions equally. Also, in other ways, the individual has ways of expression peculiar to himself. For instance, although all the houses of the village look alike, each with its bamboo walls, its thatched roof, and the beaten ground as a floor, yet closer observations reveal differences. A few houses have carving on the door; a few others have two rooms instead of the usual one; and others have been made particularly convenient with commodious shelves; and the owner becomes quite attached to his own house. When Pulong was ill and resting in another house, she was homesick for her own dwelling.[2]

183 We have seen how every man fishes, hunts pigs, builds
555 his house, and cleans the bush ground for his garden, and how every woman plants the garden and cooks; yet this seeming lack of specialization does not prevent Tukan from being more skilled than the other men at fishing and becoming known for this particular skill, nor Ongas from being able to build houses better than anyone else, and also famed for this skill, nor Pulong from becoming known for her ability to prepare taro in a special way, and Manumat

[1] See pp. 159–160.

[2] See pp. 253–255.

which gives each of them what they lack. In the vicinity of Lambuso, Pinigindu, Lemasong and Lugagun are sago swamps, which are relied upon in time of famine to support the people of the lower road, the owners then reaping large supplies of shell-money by selling the sago. 438 [261]

Dry spells from time to time produce food shortages, but as a rule these are apparently not very serious. In 1914 (?), however, no rain fell for about a year (?), and the people were in great distress. The whole country suffered from drought, and, excepting from the sago swamps, there was practically no food procurable. The period of drought and famine culminated in a series of destructive bush fires along the whole line of coast, bush and mountain ranges, and, from the graphic descriptions given to me, everything perished—wallabies, in fact, have scarcely been seen since. It is extremely probable that a great loss of life followed this period of famine. The natives said that only those with plenty of shell-money were able to keep themselves supplied with sago. People scattered far and wide, especially in the direction of Tabr, looking for food. 731

The natives now divide their time between work in their gardens and work on road maintenance, and it is possible that in some areas the demands of the road at times lead to neglect of garden work. The people of the mountain villages have villages on the coast, to which they come for a few days when their road services are due. I think this division of work and the areas for which the various villages are responsible should be made the subject of a special investigation by the district officials. Mr. Waugh, the District Officer, has in mind a scheme for the maintenance of a mobile road gang, with adequate transport facilities. If something of the kind were possible the natives could spend more time in their gardens and coco-nut groves. 421 491 651

## HOUSING.

When I first went down the Kavieng road in 1924 most of the natives' houses were small, neat-looking, rectangular structures built on piles some feet above the ground. This was a standard pattern that had been introduced by the District Officials. On this occasion, however, I noticed that in most of the villages the people were living in their old type of house. Whether these are healthier than the introduced structures I cannot tell, but it seems to me much better to improve the structure they desire to live in than to force them to build houses which they will probably vacate as soon as the Government official's back is turned. The type of house, the erection of it, and everything connected with it, is definitely part of native culture and as such should be preserved as far as possible. 342 362

4: Powdermaker B-5 (1929-1930) 1931 QM10 New Ireland QM10
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From this evidence it would appear that tuberculosis is fairly widespread. The effect of tuberculosis in increasing infant mortality has already been pointed out.

Housing conditions are of importance in this connection. The house consists of one room, with walls of bamboo, a thatched roof, and the beaten ground as a floor. There are no windows and just one door, which is usually kept shut when no one is in the house. It is quite impossible for any sun to get inside the house. While the native spends most of his time outdoors, he sleeps indoors and is there when it rains. Sputum is carelessly deposited on the ground, which serves as the floor, and babies crawl around on this ground. It is obvious that the infant is brought into very close contact with foci of infection.

The reports to the League of Nations also indicate that gonorrhea is widespread. In 1928-29, 297 males and 145 females were treated and more than half of the cases from the whole of the Mandated Territory were in New Ireland.[39] The report for 1924-25 says that "The central campaign of the year was that devoted to the combatting of gonorrhea. Over a thousand natives in all were treated for the disease, but owing to the lack of funds the campaign was unable to be pushed to a satisfactory conclusion." [40] Since gonorrhea is usually held to be the cause of a large percentage of sterility,[41] it is possible that this disease might be a cause for the increasing sterility among these women.

Syphilis is not mentioned in the Reports to the League of Nations, but this does not necessarily mean that the natives do not have the disease. The reports on autopsies performed give such causes of death as tuberculosis, dysentery, pneumonia, tropical ulcers, enteric fever, miscellaneous septic conditions, etc. It is quite possible that a native suffering from any of these might have syphilis at the same time, but that it might not be considered the cause of death. Particularly might this be so, since it is common knowledge that syphilis exists among the natives, even if one can get no statistics on the matter. If three or four boys leave their village to work in the white man's capital, or on some large plantation and return with syphilis, it would not take long for the disease to spread, in view of their rather promiscuous sexual life. The

[39] Report to the Council of the League of Nations, etc., 1928-29, p. 26.
[40] *Ibid.*, 1924-25, p. 17.
[41] Graves, W. P.—Gynecology, *Philadelphia*, 1928, p. 668. "Gonorrhea, of all the inflammations that attack the tubes (fallopian) is by far the most destructive of fertility."